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The Grade 13 Departmental Examinations  
Report and Suggestions  
November, 1960

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THE STATE OF NEW YORK  
IN SENATE

January 1, 1900  
The Senate of the State of New York


REPORT OF THE

COMMISSIONER OF THE LAND OFFICE  
IN RESPONSE TO A RESOLUTION PASSED BY THE SENATE  
JANUARY 1, 1900

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

THE GRADE 13 DEPARTMENTAL EXAMINATIONS  
REPORT AND SUGGESTIONS

for the consideration of  
The Minister of Education  
and

The University Matriculation Board

Prepared by  
The Committee on Grade 13 Examinations

November, 1960

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FOR STUDIES IN EDUCATION





## FOREWORD

In 1958 the Minister of Education, the Honourable W. J. Dunlop, appointed a Committee on Grade 13 Examinations to study ways of coping with increasing numbers of candidates, particularly with a view to maintaining the present date (about August 12) for the release of the examination results. Since his appointment as Minister in December 1959 the Honourable John P. Robarts has continued the encouragement given to the Committee in its work. By common consent the objective of the study has become a considerably earlier release of the results rather than the mere maintenance of the present release date.

The first major report of the Committee was contained in the brochure, "The Grade 13 Departmental Examinations", issued in February, 1960. The staff of the Registrar's Branch outlined the history of the University Matriculation Board and of the Departmental Examinations, described the procedure for setting and marking the papers, set forth a number of the current examination problems, and forecast some of the steps which might be taken to effect a speedier marking of the answer papers in the future. The current statement is in effect the fifth report of the Committee to the Minister.

In its investigation the Committee has enjoyed the fullest measure of support and co-operation from a great many sources. In 1958 the Registrar discussed examination procedures with officials of the State Departments of Public Instruction in Albany, New York and Ann Arbor, Michigan. Similar discussions were held with officials of the Provincial Departments of Education in Victoria, British Columbia and Edmonton, Alberta.

Undoubtedly the most fruitful phase of the study has been the visit of the Registrar to the "matriculation" examining bodies in London, Cambridge, and Manchester. The month of April, 1960 was spent at the offices of the University Entrance and School Examination Council of the University of London, the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, and the Northern Universities Joint Matriculation Board at Manchester. The notes taken at the time of the visit have served as a working guide for the Committee. The valuable assistance given by the Secretaries, the Deputy Secretaries, and the members of their staffs assures future visitors from the United Kingdom a warm and co-operative welcome in the Registrar's Branch.

Because of the official nature of the visit, permanent record should be made of the many courtesies extended by Mr. A. B. Sainsbury, the Deputy Secretary in London, in the absence through illness of the Secretary Mr. George Bruce; by Mr. J. L. Brereton and his Assistant Secretaries, Messrs. T. S. Wyatt, A. V. Hardy, and E. J. Saunders, in Cambridge; and by Mr. R. Christopher, Deputy Secretary, Mr. M. H. Evans and Mr. P. Lawrence, Assistant Secretaries, in the absence on official business of Dr. James A. Petch, the Secretary, in Manchester.





Fortunately it was possible to arrange an interview at Dover House in London with Mr. J. Kidd, Assistant Secretary of the Scottish Education Department, as a result of which several helpful suggestions were received. The practice with respect to examinations in Scotland bears somewhat closer similarity to our own than does that followed in England. The examinations are under the direct control of the Education Department, with the Secondary School Inspectors acting as Examiners-in-Chief.

Examination procedure in England, at least in the three Boards visited of the nine in operation, differs considerably from that followed in Ontario. The most noticeable differences arise from what seems to the casual observer to be a somewhat more authoritarian approach to examinations in that country. Generally speaking the examination papers are reviewed during the course of their preparation by only four or five people including the Examiners-in-Chief of related subjects and the Moderator, although in Manchester the Preparation Committees include five or six practising teachers. Whether the review of the proposed papers by at least twenty-two representatives of the Universities and the Department of Education in Ontario results in a better examination is not known. The draft marking schemes are sent out to the markers immediately following the examination. They are confirmed after two or three days of individual, isolated practice at home and one day's conference with the Examiner-in-Chief at a central point. This differs from our six to ten days of committee work on the marking schemes, although there is provision for the markers to bring to the attention of the Examiner-in-Chief any exceptionally good answers not provided for in the scheme. The associate examiners send in their first twenty-five papers for review by the Examiner-in-Chief or one of his assistants, and then adjust their marking in the light of the comments received. In most cases, no further advice is sent out to individuals, but the Examiner-in-Chief, by spot checking the work, is able to determine whether the marks for certain examiners should be raised or lowered. This practice is quite different from ours, where the associate examiners work under comparatively regimented conditions and where their marking is under close and continuous review by committee members. Despite the difference, the impression was gained that by the end of the marking period the Examiner-in-Chief is well-informed regarding the proficiency and the standards of each of the markers.

The principal appears to have more authority to determine who shall write the examinations than he has in Ontario. In addition, there is no provision for formal appeal as we know it, in the case of failure. One gathers, however, that where a candidate feels certain that he has been assigned a mark which rightfully belongs to some other person, the officials make a careful check on his behalf. The principal of a school may, upon payment of a fee, have a report from the Examiner-in-Chief upon the performance of his school.





There are other interesting differences. Practising teachers act jointly with University representatives as Examiners-in-Chief, particularly at the Ordinary Level of the General Certificate of Education examination. Teachers, if not indeed the candidates, know in most instances who is marking their papers. In one jurisdiction at least, the name of the candidate appears on his answer papers. It is true, though, that the applicant for appointment as associate examiner "declares his interest" in a particular school or candidate. It was pointed out that the somewhat less disciplined environment of the marking has resulted not only from tradition but from the enormous scale upon which the work is carried out. It is worthy of mention in passing that several of our rather strict "security" measures tend to slow up the handling of the answer papers.

It was interesting to find that "scaling" of the original marks or scores has been used at some of the centres for many years. The decision regarding the distribution of the various proficiency grades is made by a small group headed by the Examiner-in-Chief in the subject concerned, upon the basis of past experience and the current year's performance. Contrary to the situation in Ontario, this decision can be delayed until all of the papers have been marked. The official standing is reported by grades rather than by marks, and it is understood that actual marks are not made available to the Universities. This practice is of interest in view of our recent change, at the request of the Universities, from showing proficiency standing to the entering of actual marks on the certificate.

The General Certificate of Education is based upon a "subject" rather than a "group" examination as in Ontario. Thus there is no place for the elaborate rules of The Special Revising Board which take into account over-all achievement when dealing with minor deficiencies in one or more papers. Nevertheless, it should be noted that with respect to individual subjects there is considerable revision, (a) of marking standards by the Examiners-in-Chief, who check carefully a good many samples of each marker's work, and (b) of actual standing by the small group which decides upon the final distribution of proficiency grades.

In each of the centres visited, extensive use is made of mechanical equipment in the preparation of lists of candidates, in the tabulation and recording of marks, and in the preparation of statements of standing and certificates.

Some of the differences between the two systems probably arise from the fact that in England the examining bodies are creatures of the Universities rather than of the Ministry of Education. However, the signature of the appropriate official of the Ministry appears on the General Certificate of Education along with that of the Secretary of the examining body.

One feature of particular interest is the almost exclusive use of the essay-type question, supported at the Advanced Level by practical tests in the sciences and at both Levels by oral tests in several of the languages. However, Mr. Bruce of London has recently made two visits to the United States to look into the possibility of using some objective-type items.





Despite the reference to University rather than Ministry of Education direction of the examinations, certain important and seemingly contradictory features should be mentioned. In each of the centres visited the Ordinary Level is thought of as a School Examination; for it, both Examiners-in-Chief are frequently chosen from the secondary schools. The Advanced Level, with which we are necessarily more concerned at the moment, is used for university admission; here one senses more university influence and finds more markers from the universities and from among the more highly qualified secondary school teachers. Another feature which should not be overlooked is the presence of a substantial percentage of practising teachers on the various committees of the Universities which lay down the syllabuses for the General Certificate of Education examinations, govern the general nature of the examinations, and review applications for appointment as Examiners-in-Chief and as markers. Thus, while the Ministry of Education does not participate in the examinations, the secondary school teachers as individuals and as representatives of their fellow-teachers, do exercise considerable influence.

Obviously the procedures followed in England would be no more acceptable in their entirety in Ontario than would ours be in that country. Nevertheless, the information gained has provided a great many suggestions for the study of possible improvements in our practices. While specific reference will not be made at each point to the debt we owe to the British officials, it may be stated unequivocally that the present report would not have been possible at this time without the inspiration and assistance gained from personal discussions with them.

At home the members of The Supervising Board and of The Special Revising Board have made helpful suggestions also. The Examiners-in-Chief and the Associate examiners, as well as the school principals, have willingly prepared reports upon a number of questions referred to them. The Registrars of the Universities have replied to questionnaires sent to them during their busiest period.

As a result of its investigations the Committee believes that the changes being suggested and those implied in the questions being raised would tend not only to improve the nature of the examinations, but also to permit an earlier release of the results.

Toronto, November 2, 1960

Committee on Grade 13 Examinations

C. A. Brown, R. W. B. Jackson  
A. H. McKague, G. J. Westwood







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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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## Chapter 1

### REPORT ON THE EXTENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Minister recently asked the Head of each member University whether his institution wished to have the Grade 13 Departmental Examinations continued in substantially their present form for at least seven to ten years. While he did not elaborate, the Minister had in mind the continuance of the predominantly essay-type examination, marked at a central point under carefully controlled uniform conditions.

Some Heads made suggestions, and others wished to leave the way open for discussion of possible changes, but the replies left no doubt that the Department must plan to continue the examinations in more or less the present pattern for some little time. This is in accordance with Departmental opinion, since the use of the Grade 13 examination as a graduation standard necessitates careful setting of the papers and accurate marking in a uniform manner.

The following table, based upon the best information available, indicates the extent of the problem.

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Number of<br/>Candidates</u> | <u>Number of<br/>Papers</u> | <u>Increase in Number<br/>of Papers over<br/>Previous Year</u> |
|-------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| 1954        | 15,466                          | 86,460                      | 4,160  |
| 1955        | 16,597                          | 90,209                      | 3,749  |
| 1956        | 17,829                          | 98,685                      | 8,476  |
| 1957        | 19,133                          | 105,028                     | 6,343  |
| 1958        | 20,695                          | 113,853                     | 8,825  |
| 1959        | 23,684                          | 128,693                     | 14,840   |
| 1960        | 26,638                          | *148,485                    | 19,792   |
| 1961        | 29,800 Est.                     | 163,000 Est.                | 14,515 Est.  |
| 1962        | 31,100 Est.                     | 171,000 Est.                | 8,000 Est.   |
| 1963        | 31,300 Est.                     | 172,500 Est.                | 1,500 Est.   |
| 1964        | 33,000 Est.                     | 181,500 Est.                | 9,000 Est.   |
| 1965        | 38,900 Est.                     | 213,950 Est.                | 32,450 Est.  |
| 1966        | 43,000 Est.                     | 236,500 Est.                | 22,550 Est.  |

\* The Estimated Number was 150,000 which was approximately 1% out.





## A WORD OF CAUTION

Any suggestion for speeding up the marking of the Grade 13 Departmental examination papers must take into consideration the nature of the examination. Perversely this very nature combats any attempt at speed!

1. The examination serves a dual purpose, that of high school graduation and that of university admission. This dual nature creates a problem in the setting of the papers, since they must include some questions suitable for the average candidate and others which will select prospective university material. Similarly, the marking of the papers must be of a somewhat more detailed nature than would be required for graduation: only, in view of the requirements for university admission and for the many scholarships which are now available.
2. As the only external examination in the Ontario education system, the Grade 13 papers are in many respects the only guarantee which the public has of the extent to which a uniform standard of achievement is being attained throughout the province. Further, many authorities agree that this examination is still the best predictor of university success which is available for use in Ontario. Consequently the marking of the answer papers cannot be treated lightly or hurriedly.
3. It is a group examination, in contrast to the subject examinations leading to the General Certificate of Education of the British Universities. Because of this, final action on the results must be delayed until the candidate's marks in all his subjects are available for review by The Special Revising Board.
4. The examination is predominantly essay-type. This form of necessity involves time-consuming and expert marking, as opposed to the more rapid marking of objective-type and other short answer questions which are used more freely in some of the other provinces. Yet there is a definite feeling that the essay-type question, difficult as it is to mark, is one of the strong features of the examination.
5. Because the actual conduct of the examination is under the control of the Department of Education, rather than of the Universities as in England, the practice has grown up of using the marking as a means of providing in-service training for teachers. Closely related to this is the recognized necessity of passing the work around among all the teachers who are eligible to mark. There is much to be said for these practices, but it is an inescapable fact that they prohibit the seeking out and retaining year after year of only those teachers who are best fitted by academic and professional training and





by temperament to mark most efficiently and most speedily.

6. The marking must of necessity be carried out as a temporary activity of those employed in it. A casual staff of 26 Examiners-in-Chief, 850 associate examiners, 200 clerks, and 70 typists working in the heat of the summer and at the conclusion of their regular year's duties, is at best a somewhat unwieldy working force.

Not one of the six characteristics listed above lends itself readily to speed in marking.

Further, the reputation of the Grade 13 Departmental examinations depends upon the careful setting of the question papers, the accurate marking of the answers, the re-reading of borderline papers, the checking of all papers to see that all parts have been marked correctly, and the review of all candidates' records by The Special Revising Board. The integrity of the examinations must not be sacrificed to mere speed in marking and in issuing the results.

No startling reduction can be expected in the time required for marking the papers and issuing the results. Only the most careful planning by an adequate Departmental staff and the continued co-operation of all concerned can eliminate a half-day here and perhaps a half-day there in one or more of the thirteen major operations of the summer.



## SUGGESTED CHANGES WITHIN THE CONTROL OF THE DEPARTMENT

This chapter deals with measures which have already been taken and others which are contemplated by officials of the Department with a view to earlier release of the examination results.

1. The Supervising Board

The Supervising Board will be asked to give increased attention to those features of the examination papers which facilitate the marking, such as having all sentences for translation of equal value, and stating clearly the number of points and the length required in many of the answers. This can be done without in any way interfering with the value of a question as a measuring instrument. The recent addition of two members will tend to divide the work of the Board more evenly, and also to give better subject representation.

2. The Technique of Writing Examinations

Reports of examiners in Australia, in South Africa, in England, as well as in Ontario repeatedly point out that candidates lost marks and that marking is delayed because the candidates do not know how to write examinations. Not only is the standard of English very low, but key words indicating the nature and length of the answer required are ignored; questions and parts of questions are left unnumbered; writing and spelling are frequently unworthy of senior candidates.

In the autumn of 1959 the Deputy Minister issued a memorandum on this topic, which principals were asked to bring to the attention of all Grade 13 teachers and candidates. From the comments of the 1960 examiners it would appear that the admonitions fell upon deaf ears. Surely the technique of writing examinations and of putting one's best foot forward is an art which should be practised in all grades. The Deputy Minister is planning to issue a suitable memorandum again this year.

3. The Selection of Associate Examiners

The introduction in 1960 of the Statement of Availability, by which teachers were able to indicate in January that they were willing to act as associate examiners, did much to reduce the number of appointees who declined to act. Thus a certain amount of duplication and wasted time was eliminated in the preparatory work for the marking.

|   |       |
|---|-------|
| Number of eligible people sending in Statements of Availability | 1,311 |
| Number of these who could be offered appointment                | 990   |
| Number of associate examiners actually used                     | 845   |
| Number declining after sending Statements of Availability       | 68    |
| Number who withdrew after accepting appointment                 | 71    |





Of the 139 who declined or withdrew, a total of 34 were appointed to teach summer courses, 26 took summer courses themselves, and 23 were forced to change their plans because of personal or family illness or misadventure.

Of those who acted as associate examiners, slightly over 50% were holders of the High School Specialist's Certificate, and a further 14% were holders of either the Interim High School Assistant's Certificate, Type A or the Permanent High School Assistant's Certificate (Endorsed). Since only 42% of the Grade 13 teachers in the provincial secondary schools during 1959-60 held the High School Specialist's Certificate, it was felt that the Specialist teachers responded well to the Minister's request for their assistance.

Except in the case of English and French, a satisfactory number of examiners was obtained. If the certificates are to be released at an earlier date, a relatively higher number of markers must be found for those subjects. It may be that an increase in the 10% chosen from the Universities and the private schools would improve the situation. This will be considered when the appointments are being made for 1961. In addition, there is no doubt that if the proposed living allowance for associate examiners from outside Metropolitan Toronto is implemented, more of the experienced teachers will be interested in marking.

#### 4. The Need for Adequate Departmental Staff

The suggestions made in this Report and the changes implicit in the questions raised are such that, given an adequate staff, they can all be carried out.

It should be stated clearly, however, that no attempt can be made to change our procedures along the lines indicated without prior assurance of adequate staff organization as recommended in a separate memorandum to the Minister.

#### 5. The Problem of Late Candidates

The provision for late application to write the examinations, upon payment of a \$2 fee, adds considerably to the problem of administration. Further, if I.B.M. equipment is introduced for the processing of the results, numbering of candidates will be necessary in May, prior to the arrival of the answer papers at the Department.

In 1959, there were 963 late candidates, who wrote 1,577 papers and passed 860 of them. In 1960 there were 1,047 late candidates, whose performance has not been checked at the time of this writing. A study of these candidates uncovered little evidence that they could not have made application at the proper time if they had chosen to do so.



In September, 1960 the principals of the secondary schools and of the inspected private schools were asked to comment upon this problem. Their replies indicated almost unanimously that in their opinion no injustice would be done any candidate if the late fee were raised to a point which would practically eliminate late applications. They pointed out the necessity of advertising extensively any change of this nature and of leaving provision for cases of emergency.

The Committee has recommended to the Minister that the Regulations be amended to raise the late fee from \$2 to \$10. A further recommendation seeks permission to delay the marking of papers of late candidates until the other papers have been dealt with.

#### 6. The Problem of Very Weak Candidates

In 1959, of the 128,693 papers written, 11,105 received fewer than 35 marks. In 1960, of the 148,485 papers written, 10,226 received fewer than 35 marks. Apart from the time wasted in marking these papers, they involved an apparently unjustifiable expenditure of some \$40,000 in marking costs.

In September, 1960 the principals were asked for their suggestions as to how these weak papers might be eliminated. The replies indicated a strong desire on the part of principals for Departmental support in their attempts to discourage obviously weak candidates from writing the examinations. Almost unanimously they suggested that where the principal and staff believe that a student is not entitled to a mark of at least 35 on his year's work in a subject he has very little, if any, chance of passing. The principals were, however, just as urgent in qualifying their comments in two ways; first, 'there is always the possibility that a student who has done poorly during the year may manage by strenuous effort to squeeze through the final examination; second, adequate provision should be made to safeguard students from unintentional abuse of the suggested plan on the part of any teachers whose marking during the year is unduly severe.

Despite the most charitable approach to the situation the plain fact is that a student who has not obtained a standing of at least 35 per cent on his year's work, or a private-study candidate who has had insufficient preparation, is not entitled to delay the release of the examination results or to put the Province to the unnecessary expense of marking his papers, without a penalty of some kind. At this critical juncture, it seems advisable to make a bold and firm attack upon what has long been considered an unsatisfactory situation.

The Committee and the Superintendent of Secondary Education have recommended to the Minister that the Regulations be amended





to provide that where a candidate's application to write the examination in a paper is not supported by a confidential recommendation mark of 35 or over, from

- (a) the principal of a secondary school or an inspected private school, or
- (b) the principal of a night school connected with a secondary school or an inspected private school, or
- (c) the Director of the Departmental Correspondence Courses,

he shall be required to pay a fee of \$5 for each paper written, the fee to be refunded if he passes.

#### 7. The Use of Objective-Type Test Items

With the concurrence of the University Matriculation Board, the Minister approved for the 1960 June examinations, the use of objective-type test items not exceeding 30% of the total value of the paper, in Chemistry, History, French Composition, Trigonometry and Statics, and Zoology. While a number of constructive criticisms were received and while those in charge are aware that improvements can be effected, there seemed to be general agreement that limited use of objective-type test items is acceptable. There is no doubt that considerable time was saved in the marking.

In order that Examiners-in-Chief might begin to plan their papers, the Minister has approved the use of objective-type test items not exceeding 30% of the total value of the paper in Botany, Chemistry, Geometry, History, French Authors, French Composition, Trigonometry and Statics, and Zoology for the 1961 June examinations.

#### 8. The Number of Days Required for Preparation of the Marking Schemes

Some concern has been expressed over the fact that from 6 to 10 days of committee work are now required in June for the preparation and testing of the marking schemes. Not only does this involve an expenditure of about \$17,000 but it was suggested that some School Boards and principals object to having key people away from the schools during the promotion-meetings period. A Committee of Chairmen was asked to report upon this situation, particularly in view of the fact that years ago we required only two or three days, and that in England the Examiner-in-Chief meets with the markers for only one day to discuss the marking scheme after they have tried it out for three or four days at home.

The group was unanimous in doubting the wisdom, practicability, and economy of shortening the period of committee discussion in June. It was pointed out that the committee members must thoroughly understand the scheme and concur in all decisions made if they are to explain and apply it efficiently and uniformly.



Experience proves that the marking in the section begins much earlier when the scheme has been subjected to thorough criticism and revision.

The principal objection to shortening the period of committee discussion is that it would involve a radical change in the examination system. Grade 13 standards are now set as a result of free consultation between an academic expert representing the Universities, the Examiner-in-Chief, and representatives of the practising teachers, the committee. If this discussion is curtailed, the Examiner-in-Chief must be allotted a great deal more authority than he now exercises, both in setting standards and in deciding in detail what material is to receive credit in the candidates' answers. Shifting the balance in this way would involve us in accepting a more authoritarian system than the one we have developed in Ontario. In such a system standards would be imposed arbitrarily by the Examiners-in-Chief, many of whom have not taught in secondary schools. It is doubted that this change would be acceptable to markers, to teachers generally, and to the public. Examiners-in-Chief would probably prefer not to accept the new responsibility. It is true that in England the marking schemes appear to be prepared in a somewhat more arbitrary manner, but tradition there is different from ours. Particularly on the "A" Level, the British examiners are concerned mainly with the desire to select students who are well prepared to pursue university courses. In Ontario some Grade 13 graduates do not plan to enter university. Rather they intend to follow careers which do not necessarily demand academic proficiency equal to that required for success in university.

Further, the group was of the opinion that objection on the part of principals or School Boards to absence for this type of committee work is found only in rare and isolated cases.

In view of the report, the Committee on Grade 13 Examinations favours continuing the present period for committee discussion at the end of June for the purpose of firmly establishing the marking scheme before the main body of markers begins its work.

#### 9. The Use of Semi-Permanent Chairmen

Several years ago the Department adopted the policy of continuing the Chairmen of the marking sections in office even after the usual three-year term as associate examiner had expired. This has proved to be an excellent move. Without the assistance of these experienced chairmen we could not have coped with the problems of recent years, nor could we face the immediate future with confidence. It is true that this plan delays the promotion of competent examiners to the chairman's position. However, circumstances and the passage of time create openings.

#### 10. The Format of the Examination Books

The examination books which are used for the Grade 13 Examinations, with their alternating blank and lined pages and their left-hand





margins, have not changed significantly since July 1902 when they replaced the examination pads or paper formerly authorized for the use of candidates. In a 1901 announcement it was stated that "while the form, ruling and color of these books are subject to authorization by the Education Department, the books themselves must be obtained through the regular trade channels".

From time to time, associate examiners have suggested that a margin on the right-hand side of the page for the marker's entries would speed the work. There is something to be said for having the questions printed in a book with spaces left for the answers, as is done in some of the western provinces. A study of the books used in 1960 indicates that if they were prepared with twice as many pages, there would be less waste of books than at present, and since in a great many cases only one book would be used, the administration of the marking would be greatly facilitated. A sampling of opinion from 1960 associate examiners did not reveal any urgent desire for a change in the examination books. This matter will receive further study.

#### 11. Sectional Marking of the Papers

For the past two years a number of the sections have used sectional marking, where one group of markers deals with some of the questions, and other groups with other questions. This plan has resulted in faster marking, and the policy will be to extend it to most of the sections.

#### 12. The Use of Adding Clerks in the Sections

In 1960 some of the sections were provided with clerks to perform the additions after the papers had been marked. In general this relieved the teachers of a tedious and tension-producing part of their work and also tended toward greater speed and accuracy. It is planned to extend this plan to most of the sections.

#### 13. The Checking of the Papers After They Have Been Marked

The careful checking of all papers to ensure that all parts of questions have been marked and that all additions are correct is an integral part of the marking programme. As a result of a conference with Examiners-in-Chief and Chairmen in August, 1960, it is expected that steps will be taken to simplify the problem of checking without in any way reducing its efficiency.

One problem arising from the various steps taken to speed the marking is the division of responsibility for accuracy. In the days when a teacher marked the whole paper and when his errors were recorded and reported to the Joint Committee for appropriate action, there was a very close check on his activities. With the spread of responsibility for a single paper among three or four markers and



one or two clerks, there is more room for errors and more likelihood of one worker depending on another to find errors. Steps will be taken to restore the recording and reporting of at least certain types of error, to ensure that care is taken at each stage.

#### 14. The Work of The Special Revising Board

The Special Revising Board must stand as the guarantee to the public that each candidate receives equitable treatment under the examination system. If it were not for the activities of the Board in the interests of the candidates, the results would be issued several days earlier. However, the Board as its contribution to an earlier release of the results is planning to adjust its procedures to permit faster action without in any way reducing its effectiveness.

#### 15. The Actual Process of Releasing the Results

With the exception of those centres in the northwestern part of the province, the certificates are held at the Department of Education offices for simultaneous release to the schools through the Post Office in the Parliament Buildings. No certificates are distributed directly to the candidates or to the schools from the Department. The certificates for many centres are ready for mailing at least two weeks before the work is completed and before all can be released.

A questionnaire was sent in September, 1960 to principals to determine the time lag between the release of the certificates from the Department and their receipt by the candidates. From the replies it is apparent that in almost every case the certificates left the schools, either by mail or carried by the individual candidates, on either the first or second day after they left the Post Office in the Parliament Buildings.

Continued study will be given to the possibility of staggering the release of the certificates from the Department, but it should be kept in mind that any change in the plan of simultaneous release through the Post Office would likely cause more trouble than it is worth.

A questionnaire was sent to the Registrars of the Universities to determine the time lag between the release of the certificates from the Department and their receipt by the Universities. From the replies it would appear that the majority of the candidates lose very little time in sending their certificates off to the University of their first choice.

Where a candidate wishes to apply to two or more Universities for admission, it is ordinarily necessary for him to obtain one or





more statements of standing from the Department of Education. This of necessity creates problems.

- (a) It obviously delays the application to the second, third, or fourth university.
- (b) It causes a great deal of work (a median time of at least 20 minutes each) for the Department at a time when appeals are being dealt with, diplomas are being prepared, and the casual typing and clerical staff has practically disappeared.
- (c) The Department's policy of showing only those papers in which the candidate has passed, is not satisfactory for some of the Universities.

The officials of the Department would appreciate being relieved of the necessity of preparing duplicate statements of standing at a time when the available work force could be put to better use.

#### 16. Decentralization of the Marking

From time to time it has been suggested that the papers could be marked faster if two or more marking centres were set up in different parts of the province. The Departmental officials concerned have pointed out that decentralization would increase rather than decrease the time required for marking the papers and processing the results.

With the increase of accommodations at the University of Toronto it is assumed that all of the space necessary for the examination work will be available. It should be emphasized that it is only because of the continued co-operation of the University authorities, and particularly because of the extensive use of centrally-located University College, that the present release date has been possible. The problem of parking for the associate examiners, which had reached disturbing proportions, apparently resolved itself when the Department found it necessary in 1960 to dissociate itself from any attempt to assist in providing parking facilities. A committee of the 1960 chairmen reported in favour of continuing the present practice of having all of the papers marked in Toronto. The Committee on Grade 13 Examinations suggests that no action be taken in the immediate future on the question of decentralization.

#### 17. The Desirability of Discontinuing the August Examinations

The August Grade 13 Departmental Examinations, for teachers only, were established in 1924, following the discontinuance of the September supplemental examinations. Their main purpose was to assist elementary school teachers to up-grade their academic standing and consequently to up-grade their professional qualifications. In 1948 because of the scarcity of elementary school teachers the



August examinations were opened to students who require standing in one or more Grade 13 papers in order to enter the One-year Course at Teachers' College. The actual certificate is held at the Department until the following June and is cancelled if for any reason the candidate does not attend Teachers' College. In effect, the August examinations have become supplemental examinations for one special group of students who have failed on the June examinations.

There are several reasons for the discontinuance of the August Grade 13 Departmental Examinations.

- (a) Their existence is creating increasing pressure for supplementals for all candidates, a situation which could not possibly be handled.

The supplemental examinations were discontinued in 1924 because it had become impossible to get the results out in time for university and normal school admissions. At that time the Minister stated that the newly-established Special Revising Board would ensure that worthy candidates received as favourable treatment as they would have hoped for under the supplemental examination scheme.

- (b) The preparation of the August papers requires time of The Supervising Board and of the Printing Office, which could be spent to better advantage on the June papers.
- (c) The setting and printing of the papers, the arrangement for examination centres, the payment of presiding officers, and the cost of marking is an expense which tends to curtail necessary expenditure for the preparation and marking of the June examinations.
- (d) The three-day marking period at the end of August removes the Examiners-in-Chief from the re-reading of papers which have been appealed, and thus is responsible for considerable delay in dealing with appeals.
- (e) While there are still some elementary school teachers who are raising their academic standing from Grade 12 to Grade 13, and some vocational teachers who are endeavouring to obtain Grade 13 standing in six papers to permit them to proceed to Specialist standing, and who prefer to do so in August, the original purpose of the August examinations has lost most of its urgency.
- (f) So far as prospective Teachers' College applicants are concerned,
  - (i) the statistics show that most of them, understandably, do little better in August than they did in June, and





- (ii) the necessity for admitting these academically-weak students has been eliminated by the increasing number of applicants.

The Superintendents concerned and the Committee on Grade 13 Examinations have recommended to the Minister that the August Grade 13 examinations be discontinued after the August examinations of 1961.



## SUGGESTIONS FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF THE UNIVERSITY MATRICULATION BOARD

In this chapter the Committee discusses a number of problems which are the joint concern of the Department of Education and the University Matriculation Board.

### 1. Representation on The Supervising Board

One factor which militates against the preparation of the best possible examination papers is the uncontrolled subject-representation on The Supervising Board. The University Matriculation Board has been sympathetic when this problem was mentioned in the past, but it has seemed difficult to find a remedy. The Joint Committee plans to draw up a suggested rotation of subject-representatives which might ease the situation.

### 2. The Selection of Examiners-in-Chief

A source of considerable concern and additional work for the Department is the difficulty in obtaining a sufficient number of Examiners-in-Chief each year. The Heads of the Universities have acknowledged their responsibility to provide Examiners-in-Chief, but, when nominations were asked for, very few were forthcoming.

The Department recognizes that many difficulties are involved, but points out that unless the Joint Committee can be in a position to choose the most suitable Examiner-in-Chief for the year (or the term) concerned, the examinations and the candidates may suffer. The year 1960 has been notable for the fact that three Examiners-in-Chief have had to be excused for the marking period because of their appointments to new and more responsible positions. Fortunately, experienced men were available to take over the work.

This leads naturally to the question, "How important is it to the Universities to have the Examiner-in-Chief in a subject rotate among them?" In England the examining bodies, because they usually serve only one university, are freer to use what might be called the "professional" Examiner-in-Chief, who may set a paper for several years in succession.

### 3. The Scaling of Marks

The possibility of having to treat the original marks as raw scores and to scale them to a pre-determined distribution has been referred to in several instances. It was forecast in the brochure on the Grade 13 Departmental Examinations prepared before the Registrar's visit to England and was raised at the last meeting of this Board. It has been mentioned to several of the marking sections. With the approval of the Minister, scaling was of necessity used in connection with the five papers of 1960 where





objective-type test items were involved. No voice has been raised against the introduction of the practice. The Special Revising Board has recommended its use. The principal reasons for adopting this procedure are as follows.

- (a) A study of the distribution of the various Honour standings for the past eleven years shows that the percentage of First Class Honours, for instance, has varied greatly with the subject and with the year.
- (b) The great number of scholarships which are available makes it necessary that a candidate who takes certain subjects should have as good a chance of obtaining First Class Honours as one who takes certain other subjects, due regard being had to various relevant circumstances.
- (c) The use of objective-type test items, where it is impossible as yet for The Supervising Board to gauge the difficulty of that part of the paper, makes it necessary to scale the marks in the papers concerned.

The problem is, of course, to decide upon the particular distribution to use. In some jurisdictions, the same pre-determined percentages are used for all papers year after year. In others, past experience along with the current year's experience are used as a basis.

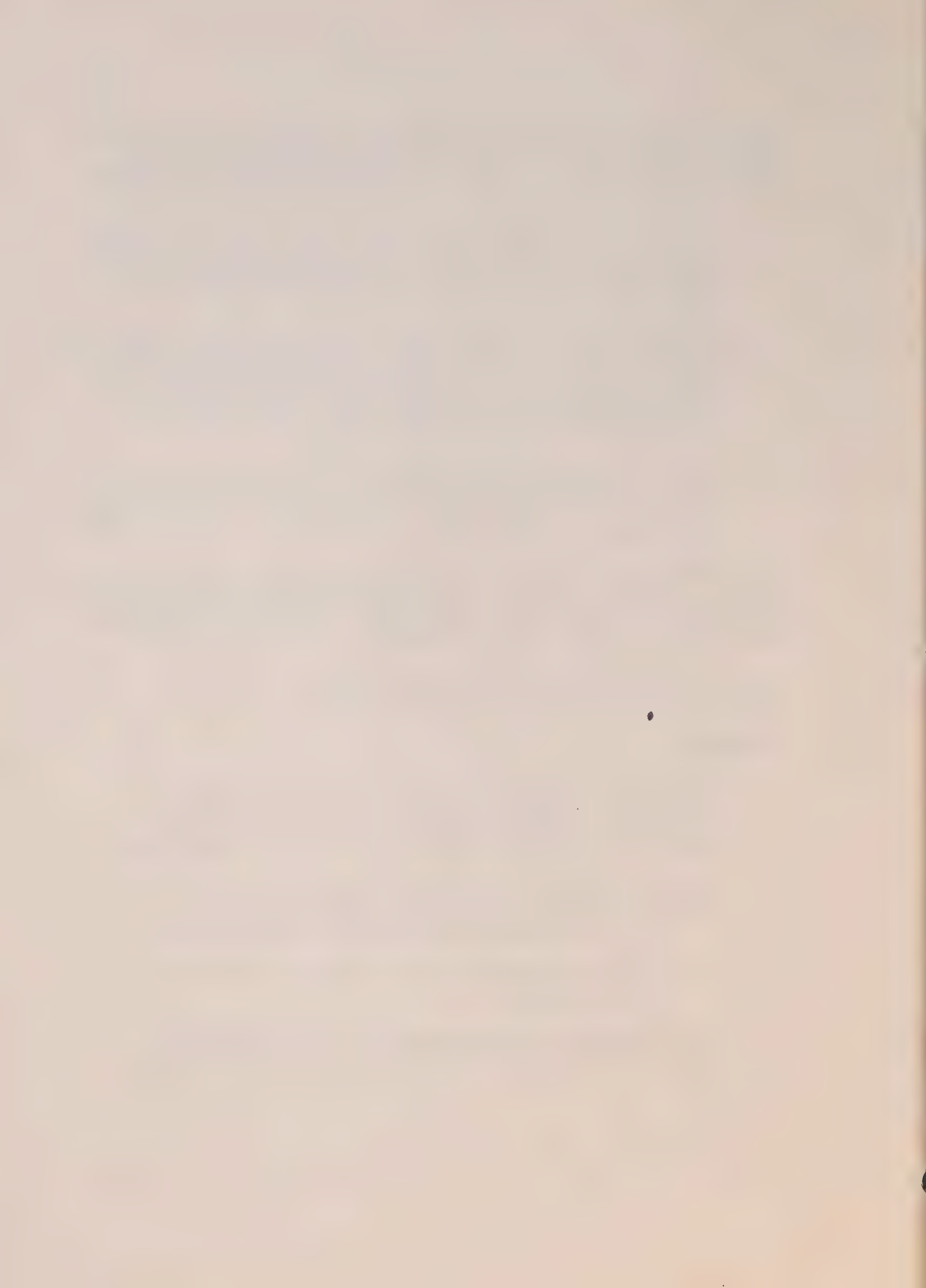
The Department seeks the concurrence of The University Matriculation Board in the following proposal.

#### Proposal

That until further notice is given by this Board and the Minister, the final Grade 13 Departmental Examination marks be assigned upon a distribution to be determined each year for each paper by a committee comprising

- (a) the Committee on Grade 13 Examinations;
- (b) the Chairman of The Special Revising Board and one of its members representing the Universities; and
- (c) the Examiner-in-Chief and the Chairman for the paper concerned,

upon the basis of the information at their disposal regarding past experience and the experience of the current year.



#### 4. The Marking of Scholarship Papers

For many years the papers of University Scholarship candidates were all marked by the Examiner-in-Chief, to ensure uniform treatment as a basis for the award of University Scholarships. In recent years, because of numbers, it has been necessary to have the University Scholarship papers marked by a group of from two to eleven Scholarship markers who assist the Examiner-in-Chief.

The officials of the Department consider that the time has come when the University Scholarship papers must be marked in the regular section. The principal reasons for this decision are as follows.

- (a) The setting up of what amounts to an additional 14 marking sections creates an undue administrative burden.
- (b) The segregation of the scholarship answer papers as they come in from the schools adds greatly to our work, and delays it.
- (c) The segregation of scholarship papers and the resulting unequal rate of marking between the regular section and the scholarship group make it difficult to obtain a completely representative sampling when it becomes necessary to decide upon standards.
- (d) The increase in the numbers of different scholarships based upon the Grade 13 results gives rise to doubt whether University scholarships alone should receive special treatment.
- (e) The original advantage arising from having all University Scholarship papers marked by one person has disappeared, since groups do the marking.
- (f) It is generally admitted that the marking in the Scholarship group may be easier or harder, but certainly different, from the marking in the section.
- (g) The return of a number of highly competent markers to each section will strengthen the marking in general.
- (h) At present, most of the Examiners-in-Chief have difficulty in maintaining proper contact with both the Scholarship group and the section, who are often located in different buildings.
- (i) In response to an enquiry in 1960, most of the University Registrars reported that a number of their Scholarship applicants were not actually of Scholarship calibre.





A committee comprising four University people and two teachers reported in favour of having the University Scholarship papers marked in the section, and made acceptable suggestions for checking these papers.

### Proposal

The officials of the Department propose for the examinations of 1961 and subsequent years,

- (a) that the University Scholarship papers be marked in the section without being designated as Scholarship papers; and
- (b) that the Examiner-in-Chief, who will be told which are University Scholarship papers, and the Registrar decide upon a suitable method for special checking of those papers which seem to have any likelihood of affecting the award of any type of scholarship.

### 5. The Use of I.B.M. Equipment for Processing the Results of the Examination

It is generally accepted that the use of IBM machines has possibilities for the speedier and indeed more accurate processing of many clerical operations. Because of the lack of staff for planning improvements, and because the casual typists have been able to prepare the certificates as fast as the papers were marked, we have not as yet made use of this type of equipment in connection with the Grade 13 examinations. However, in view of the prospect of faster marking, it now seems advisable to consider the use of mechanical aids. In the Statistics Branch of the Department and in the Department of Educational Research of the Ontario College of Education there are already practically all of the machines necessary to carry out the operations required. There is also a core of well-qualified staff members who would probably be available to assist in supervising the work.

Equipment of this nature is used in several of the western provinces and by the three examining bodies visited in England. Our proposals are based upon the plan followed by the examining board of the University of London and similar procedures followed in Cambridge and Manchester.

- (a) Mechanical equipment is used to assign identification numbers to schools and to candidates before the examination starts. (We might not need to do this.)
- (b) The equipment is used for the tabulation of marks leading to scaling. (We have had this done for us at O.C.E. in 1959 and 1960 in the case of subjects found to be too difficult.)



- (c) When the marks are final, sheets similar to our Permanent Record Cards are prepared mechanically. These sheets are set up for each school separately and show the name and marks of each candidate. Four copies are made by using carbon paper. The first two copies are sent to the school. One of these is perforated so that the slip for each candidate may be torn off and given to him. The school keeps the other copy for its records, thus eliminating any delay such as we have while the principal records the results from the actual certificates as they pass through his hands.

The examining body retains the third and fourth copies. After any errors (no appeals) are corrected, the corrected copy is photographed as a permanent record. (This procedure has been followed for two years by the Department of Educational Research of O.C.E. in connection with the Grade 12 Departmental Tests.) Almost simultaneously with the sending of the "mark sheets" to the schools, the examining body photographs 100 copies of the "A" Level sheets and binds them in book form. A copy of this complete result book is sent to each of the Universities in the United Kingdom. Actual certificates are prepared for the candidates later in the autumn.

The Minister has appointed a committee to study the possibility of using I.B.M. equipment in connection with the Grade 13 results. An amount has been included tentatively in the Estimates for 1961-62 to finance an experimental run in 1961, quite apart from the official procedure. The I.B.M. procedures in so far as they affect the Department itself, could doubtless be followed quite easily, but they would probably be of little value unless the Universities are interested in the following proposal.

Question:

In order to eliminate the present gap of at least 7 days between the release of the certificates and their receipt at the Universities, and also to relieve the Department of the necessity of typing all University Scholarship results, would the Universities be interested in receiving either a photostat copy or an original I.B.M. run of the mark sheets for all candidates in the province, arranged by schools?

Perhaps the Board would be willing to appoint a committee to study the advantages and disadvantages of the proposal.



## 6. The Appeals

The officials of the Department consider that the privilege of appeal is such an important feature of the Grade 13 Examinations that when fees generally were raised throughout the Government service recently, no change was made in the \$2 appeal fee. The appeal not only gives the candidate an opportunity to have his failure re-considered, but it gives the officials an excellent check upon the accuracy of the marking. It seems reasonable to believe that between those who appeal and those successful candidates who insist that they must have been given some other candidate's marks a check is made of every paper where any doubt exists.

However, the appeals present several problems.

- (a) Their mere existence delays University and Teachers' College admissions.
- (b) Under the most favourable conditions an appeal is not processed under the present plan in less than a 10-day period; frequently the period is considerably longer.
- (c) The marking of all appeals within a reasonable time by the Examiner-in-Chief alone has become an almost impossible task. The Examiners-in-Chief have been offered assistance, but understandably they prefer to earn the additional money, often while on their all-too-brief vacation.
- (d) The sending of papers for re-reading from the Department to the Examiner-in-Chief's home or vacation area involves a delay which would be unnecessary if the appeals could be marked at the Department.
- (e) The appeal work comes at a time when practically all of our casual clerks and typists have left us for their short vacation before returning to school.

The following data indicate the seriousness of the situation.

- (a) In 1959 a total of 1,956 candidates appealed their failures in a total of 2,876 papers, in 849 of which the appeal was sustained. It should be noted that in very few cases is a paper actually re-read up to 50 marks. What happens is that by being raised by 2 or 3 marks it has come within certain rules of The Special Revising Board which may be applicable in that case.
- (b) In 1960 a total of 2,574 candidates appealed their failures in a total of 3,682 papers, in 990 of which the appeal was successful.





- (c) Appeals must be made before September 15. However, many of them are received within a week or two of the release date.
- (d) On September 29, 1960 there were still 404 appeals to be dealt with. On that date over 200 papers were still in the hands of two Examiners-in-Chief, or in transit.

It would seem that in fairness to the candidates and to the institutions of higher learning an effort should be made to speed the handling of appeals.

The officials of the Department have recommended to the Minister

- (a) that for 1961 and subsequent years the Registrar be empowered to divide the re-marking of appealed papers among the Examiners-in-Chief and the available committee members in such a manner that all appeals can be decided within 2 weeks of their receipt; and
- (b) that if and when the August examinations are discontinued, provision be made for re-marking as many of the appealed papers as possible at the Department under normal marking conditions during the period now spent in marking the August papers.

### Question

The officials of the Department ask for an expression of opinion from the Universities regarding the increasing demand for the privilege of appeal in cases where the mark falls between 50 and 60.

### 7. The Possibility of Reducing the Number of Papers to be Written

Obviously the answers to one 3-hour paper can be marked more quickly than the answers to two 2½-hour papers of a similar nature. In addition, there has been some suggestion that a reduction in the number of papers might have some effect in reducing the load of the Grade 13 year.

The first moves in a campaign to replace "papers" by subjects in the Grade 13 organization occurred in 1952. Others have followed from time to time.

- (a) At its meeting on December 16, 1952 the University Matriculation Board received a letter from the Advisory Board of the Ontario Agricultural College, requesting discussion of the possibility of reducing language requirements from two papers (Authors and Composition) to one paper only.



- (b) On December 15, 1952 Mr. F. C. Asbury, Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Education, who served for several years as Chairman of The Special Revising Board, submitted to the Minister a memorandum setting forth a plan to have the four Mathematical papers of the present June examination replaced by two papers:

Mathematics I - for candidates for university courses now demanding only two mathematics papers, for Teachers' College candidates, and for graduation purposes; and

Mathematics II - for candidates for university courses now demanding three mathematics papers.

Neither of these two proposals received very much encouragement from the Universities.

- (c) In 1956 the Department, again at the instigation of Mr. Asbury, made another attempt to improve the examination, having in mind the Ordinary Level and the Advanced Level examinations leading to the General Certificate of Education. With the concurrence of the University Matriculation Board, the Experimental Examinations of 1957 were written early in June by approximately 1,100 Grade 13 candidates whose schools volunteered to participate in the experiment. The subjects concerned were Mathematics and French. In each subject two papers were set: one a General paper which would, if adopted, be written by all Grade 13 candidates in the subject concerned, and would test on the level of secondary school graduation and non-specialist study in the subject concerned at university; the other a Special paper, which would be more searching and would be tried by those who hoped to take an Honour Course in that subject or in a related subject. The results on these experimental examinations were eventually studied with reference to the actual Grade 13 results, the results of the Atkinson Study tests, and the performance of the students concerned during their first year at University. A formal report has not yet been made to the Board or the Department, but the informal reports prepared at the time might well serve as the basis of further study.
- (d) In the reply to the Minister's recent enquiry, one University suggested that the use of a single paper in English and in the other languages, and the combination of Geometry and Trigonometry in a single paper would assist in the earlier release of the results.
- (e) There has been the suggestion that some secondary school teachers see in a reduction of the number of papers the danger of curtailment of the time allotted to their subjects in the school timetable.





### Question

Would the Board consider the establishment of a committee representing the Board, the Department, and the secondary schools, which might come to grips with this question?

### 8. Other Suggestions from the Universities

#### (a) The possibility of having two examinations

One of the Heads suggested the possibility of establishing two levels somewhat along the lines of the Advanced (A) and the Ordinary (O) Levels of Great Britain's General Certificate of Education.

The following gratuitous comments may be helpful in this connection, although they should not in any way prevent discussion of the suggestion. In England the Registrar had several conferences with Mr. Frank Ferguson, head of the English Department at Galt Collegiate Institute, who was studying at the University of London during his sabbatical leave. In the perspective of three thousand miles distance from Ontario and perhaps under the influence of the more authoritarian approach to examinations in England, the two men felt there was something in favour of a double examination at the end of Grade 13. One of these, for graduation purposes, could be marked during June at the centres where the District Secondary School Inspectors are situated, and under their direction. Two or three committee members in each subject, from each of the marking centres, could meet with the Examiner-in-Chief for a day or two in Toronto and then return to the local area to assist in establishing uniform standards throughout the province. The other examination, the delight of all Examiners-in-Chief, would present a challenge to those who were good university material. In this case the answer papers would be marked in Toronto, much as at present, but with a greater preponderance of High School Specialists and University representatives among the markers.

The enthusiasm for this possible solution of several difficulties was dampened from two widely-separated sources. Assistant Secretary A. V. Hardy of Cambridge, a former teacher of Advanced Level pupils, pointed out that these pupils spend two years in school beyond the Ordinary Level. He expressed the belief that unselected candidates could not be prepared for an Advanced Level examination worthy of the name by a teacher who was at the same time and in the same class group preparing other candidates for the Ordinary Level.



It may be recalled that Mr. Asbury felt that this might be possible in connection with the General and Special papers of the 1957 type. More disheartening still was the cool reaction of associates at home, who pointed out that in our democratic society we would find all candidates and their parents insisting upon the right to choose the university entrance examination.

Nevertheless, in view of the courage displayed by School Boards and principals in tightening the requirements for admission to Grade 13, the proposed firmer treatment of weak candidates seeking to write the examinations, and the interest in "streaming" classes, the day may be approaching when some restriction can be placed upon those who should probably not aspire to a university education.

#### Question

Does the Board wish to appoint a committee to follow up the Experimental Examinations of 1957 and the above related suggestions?

#### (b) The possibility of providing the Universities with unrevised marks

Another suggestion was that the Department be asked whether it would supply each University with copies of the raw marks obtained by all Grade 13 candidates in the province, prior to revisions and before the certificates are sent to candidates. By this plan the Universities would know one or two weeks prior to the present date the standings of all candidates for admission. Another possible virtue could be a re-study of the present 60% average requirement which ought to be administered with a recognition of the fact that, in a number of cases, a mark of 50 is a revised rather than a raw mark. The more important feature of this suggestion is probably the reference to the work of The Special Revising Board in granting pass standing under its rules in certain cases of failure.

The Committee on Grade 13 Examinations can understand the desire of University authorities to know whether an applicant's mark of 50 was earned by his written answers on the examination or whether it was granted under the rules of The Special Revising Board. Yet it should be kept in mind that under the present plan of a "group" examination, in which over-all proficiency compensates for minor failure, the candidate is entitled to a mark of 50 in the paper concerned if it has been assigned to him under the rules. An intolerable situation would result from the use of one set of marks by the Universities and of another set by everybody else.



The problem is perhaps not quite so serious as it might appear to be.

- (a) It seems reasonable to expect that with the introduction of scaling the degree of failure recognized by the rules of The Special Revising Board will diminish.
- (b) There seems to be little likelihood that even a candidate whose written paper actually earns only 50 marks will be proceeding to specialized work in that subject.

This very statement does, however, create some doubt regarding the advisability of "raising" failed marks in the English papers.

- (c) There is a simple way by which it could be made apparent to University authorities whether a mark of 50 had been given under the rules of The Special Revising Board, without indicating the extent of any "raise" involved.

The Committee urges that the University authorities refrain from pressing for original raw marks, at least until the general effect of scaling can be seen.

#### 9. The Difficulty of the Question Papers

From time to time suggestions have appeared in the Press that the question papers have been, or may be, made more difficult in order to reduce the number of candidates who will be eligible for admission to university. It should be stated emphatically that up to the present, at least, there has been no justification for any suggestion of that nature. At no time within the memory of those who are at present responsible for the setting of the papers has either the Minister or the University Matriculation Board made any suggestion or request regarding the difficulty of the examination. The Supervising Board has been free to set what it considers to be fair papers of an acceptable standard. In the opinion of the Committee, The Supervising Board should continue to be independent of any direction from either the Minister or the University Matriculation Board with respect to the degree of difficulty of any or all of the papers. The Committee believes that the present plan whereby each institution of higher learning sets admission standards at the particular level it chooses, on the results of an independently-set examination, is the only fair method of selection.

Possibly an expression of the Board's opinion on this matter would be helpful in clarifying the situation for candidates and their parents.





Supplemental Examinations

The officials of the Department note with regret the increasing number of Ontario Grade 13 candidates who write supplemental examinations at McGill University in order to circumvent the policy of no supplemental examinations in Ontario. It should be recalled that The Special Revising Board was established in 1924 to replace and improve upon the somewhat doubtful advantages of the former September supplementals. These weak candidates, who quite probably have already benefited from the ministrations of The Special Revising Board and whose financial and domestic situations are such that they can go to Montreal for a second chance, are certainly playing the game for all it is worth. Perhaps the Ontario officials should not have felt hurt when some parents chided them for not having the results out in time to permit proper preparation for the McGill supplementals.

In response to a request, the Registrar of McGill University stated that more than 105 Ontario students wrote their supplementals, and that late applications from Ontario students cause him considerable concern. The decision of McGill to require earlier application for supplementals in 1961 will have little effect in correcting the situation if we release our results at an earlier date!











